



**Ohio 4-H**

***Secretary's***

***Handbook***

Name of Secretary \_\_\_\_\_

Year \_\_\_\_\_ Age as of January 1 \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Club \_\_\_\_\_

4-H Advisor Signature \_\_\_\_\_



**Material**

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**References**

*Huron County 4-H Secretary's Manual*, Bonnie Malone, author.  
*4-H Secretary's Record Book*, Kansas State University, June 2005.  
*Secretary, Ohio 4-H Club Officer's Guide*, Ohio State University, 2002.

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# 4-H Secretary

## Welcome

Congratulations on your new role as your 4-H club's secretary! Your fellow club members have elected you to serve as secretary for the coming year. As a 4-H officer, you represent not only your club, but also the 4-H program throughout the state. This guide will help you understand what your role is as an officer and how to carry out your many official duties. Good luck!

## An Officer's Role in the Club

Serving as a club officer means you are part of a team. The team's responsibility is to hold a club meeting that is both well run and fun. The officers should meet with their club advisor before each meeting so that they are prepared for the meeting and to help the club make decisions.

## Your Role as a Secretary

Winning the nomination of your club's secretary is an honor and a responsibility. As secretary, your responsibilities include:

- Keeping an accurate record of proceedings of all meetings and special activities.
- Maintaining a list of all members and their attendance at meetings and activities
- Calling the roll of members at the president's request.
- Completing the minutes and signing them prior to the next meeting.
- Standing to read complete and accurate minutes at every meeting.
- Correcting minutes as directed by the president.
- Having the president sign the minutes after they are approved.
- Recording the treasurer's report and other officers' reports in the minutes.
- Recording committee reports in the minutes.
- Restating motions and looking up items in the minutes at the president's request.
- Reminding the president of unfinished business.



- Sharing correspondence with the club.
- Writing letters as directed by the club.
- Keeping a record of all officers and committees.
- Maintaining a current copy of the club's program, constitution, and by-laws.
- Conducting meetings when the president and vice president are both absent.
- Turning in the completed book at the end of the year for the club's permanent records.

## Guidelines for Secretaries

Before each meeting, gather all correspondence received since the last meeting so you can present it to the club. Be sure to have an up-to-date roll of members for easy attendance taking. Check the minutes of the last meeting for old business, such as tabled or postponed motions, and make a note to bring each item to the attention of the president.

After the meeting, write the minutes as soon as possible. Your minutes will be much more accurate and complete if you do them right away. If handwritten, be sure the final minutes are neat, legible, and written in ink. If using a word processor, be sure the final minutes are in a font that will be easy to read. Sign the completed minutes. The person who is presiding when the minutes are approved will also sign. Write any necessary business letters or thank you letters on behalf of the club.

After the last club meeting, give your completed notebook containing the club roll, communications, committee lists, leader list, and meeting minutes to your leader. Be prepared to deliver all the secretary's supplies to your successor.

## Club Roll

It is the secretary's responsibility to keep an accurate record of each member's attendance. Enter the names of your club's entire membership in your Club Roll list at the beginning of the club year. List the names alphabetically by last name. When new members join, simply add them to the bottom of the roll.

When the president asks you to take roll at the meeting, you should stay seated. Keep roll calls interesting by asking for various responses. This also lets members get to know each other a little better. Some possible answers could be:

- |                                    |                                     |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • favorite ice cream flavor        | • what you like best about Ohio     |
| • dream vacation destination       | • a hobby you have                  |
| • project work accomplished so far | • a characteristic of a good leader |
| • your middle name                 | • something you are thankful for    |
| • favorite cartoon character       | • a safety goal                     |



Another way to vary roll call is to have members guess the number of candies (or jelly beans, peanuts, etc.) in a jar. After roll call, the person with the closest guess claims the prize!

When a member is present, mark an “X” in the correct box; when a member is absent, leave the box blank.

## Leader, Officer, and Committee Lists

Keep a list of all club volunteer advisors including their phone numbers and email addresses. Also list all officers of the club. Having this information all together in one place will help you be able to quickly contact the leaders of the club. You may also want to copy the list for other advisors and officers when it is complete.

Keep a list of committees. These include standing committees of the club as well as any special committees formed during the year. A worksheet is available to help you organize this information.

## Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the meeting are the secretary’s most important job. The official minutes of the meeting are a permanent record of the 4-H club’s activities and actions. Minutes need to be neat and easy to read. They should always be written in ink or typed. In the minutes, include the following:

- Type of meeting (regular or special).
- Name of your club.
- Place and date of the meeting.
- Name of presiding officer.
- Time the meeting began.
- Number of members, leaders, parents, and guests present.
- A statement that the minutes were approved as read or corrected.
- An accurate treasurer’s report that shows previous balance, money received since last meeting, payments made after the last meeting, and current balance.
- Reports of other officers and committees.
- Complete motions including:
  - Name of the person making the motion.
  - Exact wording of the motion.
  - Who seconded the motion.
  - Whether it passed or failed.



- Committee appointments and assignments of members.
- Type of program and presenter's name.
- Record of all members giving demonstrations and their topics.
- Acknowledgement of services to the club such as who provided recreation, refreshments, etc.

A worksheet for keeping meeting notes is available online on the Club Officers Resources website at [www.ohio4h.org/members/officers](http://www.ohio4h.org/members/officers). Use it as is or change it to accommodate your style of note taking. Make a copy of the form so you have a new one to use at each meeting. Be sure to keep accurate record of speakers, motions, and votes on motions.

After the meeting is over, transfer the information into a narrative summary on the "Official Minutes Form." Sign at the bottom and ask the president (or presiding officer) to sign after the minutes have been approved. This document should be kept as your official club record.

## Sample Minutes

Secretary's Minutes  
Helping Hand 4-H Club  
January 20, 20XX

The Helping Hand 4-H Club meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Green Thumb. The meeting was held at the Community Building.

### Pledges

Pledges to the flags were led by Silver Star and Waving Hand.

### Roll Call

Roll call was to name your favorite color. There were 24 members, three advisors, and six guests present.

### Secretary's Minutes

Minutes of the December 18 meeting were read and approved.

### Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's report showed a beginning balance of \$543.89; income of \$15 from the fair booth; and expenses of \$95.20 for pizza and pop at the Christmas party; for a current balance of \$463.69.



### **Other Officer's Reports**

Scoop Writer, news reporter, sent a news article to the Firelands Farmer and Norwalk Reflector about the Christmas Party.

### **Committee Reports**

Red Clover, chairman of the Christmas Party Committee, reported that 14 members attended the annual event. Gifts were exchanged among those present. \$95.20 was spent on pizza and pop for the party. Mary Doe moved to accept the committee report. Fawn Deer seconded the motion. Motion passed

### **Unfinished/Old Business**

There was no unfinished business.

### **New Business**

Mary Doe moved to sell candy bars for the annual fund raiser. Sandy Helper seconded the motion. After much discussion, Larry Helper moved to refer the motion to a committee of three to be appointed by the president and report back at the next meeting. Chris Clover seconded the motion. Motion passed. President Green then appointed Mary Doe, Silver Star, and Waving Hand to the committee. The committee will meet and present their suggestions for a fundraiser at the next meeting.

John Brush moved to donate \$100.00 to the Fair Board to use for stone under the Cloverbud Barn. Chris Clover seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Misty Rain moved to have a Valentine's Party. Motion died for lack of second.

### **Advisor's Report**

Mrs. Helper borrowed project books from the Extension Office so members may look at the different project books available.

Larry Helper moved to adjourn the meeting. John Brush seconded the motion. Motion passed and the meeting was adjourned.

### **Educational Program**

The Educational Program for the evening was members talking about the projects they took last year and what projects they might take this year. Everyone was given a Family Guide to 4-H and then looked through the project books Mrs. Helper brought to the meeting.

### **Recreation and/or Refreshments**

The Hand family served punch and cookies. There was no recreation.



Respectfully submitted,

*Cramped Hand*

Cramped Hand  
Secretary

*(ask president to sign after being approved)*

Green Thumb  
President

## Club Program

It is important that every 4-H club prepare a program of activities at the beginning of the year. This program may be prepared by the Executive Committee (the officers), a special program committee, or any variation that works in your club. The proposed program always needs to be adopted by the club. The secretary must include in the minutes the person who moved to adopt the program of activities for the year, who seconded the motion, and whether the motion passed or failed. Keep a copy of the adopted club program in the secretary's book.

A club program of activities may take on many forms. It may be a single sheet or any size of booklet. The club program should include:

- Meeting dates, times and locations
- Special meeting topics (safety, health, achievement, etc.)
- Special activities planned (community service, project work, field trips, etc.)
- Demonstration dates, who is providing refreshments, etc.

## Club Constitution and Bylaws

Every 4-H club is required to develop a constitution and bylaws. This document reflects the organization of the club and contains any special club rules.

The entire 4-H club is responsible for writing the constitution and bylaws. These documents should be reviewed by the club each year. There should be a motion, second, and passing vote recorded in the minutes adopting the constitution and bylaws each year. Changes to the constitution must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the club. Bylaws may be changed with a standard majority vote any time throughout the year.

Each member should sign a copy of the approved constitution and bylaws each year. This signifies that every member accepts and is bound by the terms included.

A **constitution** contains the basic operating premise of the club. It will not change very often. A club constitution should include:

- The official name of the club.
- The objective or purpose of the club.



- Who is eligible for membership. (It must include state 4-H guidelines and be nondiscriminatory.)
- What officers shall be elected.
- Rules for amendments.
- The date of adoption and the current year of approval.

**Bylaws** are the club's operational rules (they may change throughout the year) and may include:

- Order of business for a club meeting.
- How officers are nominated and elected.
- Duties of the officers.
- List of standing committees.
- How special committees are set up.
- What is expected of members.
- Rules regarding the completion of projects.
- Meeting attendance rules and consequences if rules are not met.
- How bylaws may be amended.

## Forms for the Secretary

Visit the Club Officer Resources web site at [www.ohio4h.org/members/officers](http://www.ohio4h.org/members/officers) for these helpful forms:

- Club Roll
- Committees List
- List of Advisors and Officers
- List of Committees
- Official Meeting Minutes
- Meeting Notes Worksheet



## Make it a Project (optional activity)

Your efforts in this officer position can be turned into a project by completing the requirements for a self-determined project. Every self-determined project requires the 4-H member to identify and complete areas of interest and related activities, learning experiences, leadership/citizenship activities, and a brief report. Just like other projects, self-determined projects can be reviewed and are eligible for fair participation. Learn more about self-determined projects and download the 4-H 365 Self-Determined Project Guide at [www.ohio4h.org/publications](http://www.ohio4h.org/publications).

### I pledge

My head to clearer thinking,

My heart to greater loyalty,

My hands to larger service, and

My health to better living

For my club, my community, my country, and my world.

